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ABSTRACT

The booklet provides an overview of methods to review, analyze, and document interagency processes in special education. The first section considers issues in developing and evauating interagency coordination, touching upon definitions, purposes, and patterns of interagency coordination. The dynamic nature of the coordination process is stressed. The second section describes selected process evaluation methods and instruments in four areas: (1) measuring precursors to success; (2) measuring relationships and linkages among agencies; (3) measuring dynamic processes in interagency coordination; and examining state-community relationships. A three-page list of references, examples of evaluation instruments and summaries of state and local evaluation studies of interagency coordination are appended. (CL)

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Assessing Interagency Coordination

THROUGH PROCESS EVALUATION

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START

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....iii

Section I: Issues in Developing and Evaluating Interagency Coordination.....1

Definitions of Interagency Coordination.....4
Purposes of Interagency Coordination.....6
Patterns of Interagency Coordination.....7
Interagency Coordination as a Dynamic Process.....8
Summary.....9

Section II: Process Evaluation Methods.....11

Measuring Precursors to Successful Interagency Coordination.....13
Measuring Relationships and Linkages Between Agencies.....19
Measuring Dynamic Processes in Interagency Coordination.....19
Examining the State and Community Partnership.....21
Summary.....22

Summary.....23

References.....27

Appendix A: The Interunit Relationship Scale.....33
Appendix B: The Interorganizational Linkage Matrix.....47
Appendix C: The Organizational Dimensions Scale.....51
Appendix D: Summaries of Selected State and Local Evaluation 61

INTRODUCTION

People who work together to develop and coordinate services for handicapped and at-risk children face a variety of responsibilities. Among the most challenging of these responsibilities, for both state and local personnel, is evaluating interagency coordination activities; specifically, evaluating how interagency coordination develops and how interagency coordination affects comprehensive service delivery systems for young handicapped children and their families. This monograph, developed by the State Technical Assistance Resource Team (START), is intended to help state and local agencies conceptualize process evaluations of their interagency efforts. This paper is not a procedural handbook, rather, it provides an overview of methods and instruments that may be used to review, analyze, and document interagency processes. HCEEP state plan grant coordinators and those responsible for evaluating or facilitating interagency coordination efforts at state and local levels will benefit most from this document, as well as other health, administrative, and special education personnel involved with interagency efforts.

Process and Outcome: Two Kinds of Evaluation Studies

Before an evaluation can be developed, decision-makers involved in interagency efforts must determine what kind of evaluation information they want. Specifying the type of information needed will help determine whether an outcome evaluation, a process evaluation, or both, should be conducted.

An outcome evaluation focuses on the end results of various programs or products developed by the interagency effort under study (Patton, 1983). A review of the literature on interagency coordination indicates that outcome evaluation studies and the methodology for such studies are scarce (Morrisey, Hall, & Lindsay, 1982). Nevertheless, a need does exist for ways to assess the outcomes of interagency coordination and the effects of interagency coordination on comprehensive service delivery systems. As such, outcome evaluations of interagency coordination might focus on either of two areas of concern. One area looks at specific components of the comprehensive service delivery system as outcomes of interagency efforts. This type of outcome evaluation would address such questions as:

- Have conflicting policies across agencies been successfully reconciled?
- Are eligibility requirements consistent across agencies?
- Have agencies participating in coordination efforts mutually agreed upon their respective responsibilities and roles?

The other type of outcome evaluation is more client focused. It assesses the effectiveness of the comprehensive service delivery system and examines such areas of concern as:

- Were all of the children and families who needed services actually identified?
- Did they receive the necessary services?
- To what extent have the children and families identified as needing services received appropriate individual program plans?
- Are they actually making progress as a result of the plans?

Evaluation studies that examine these kinds of outcomes will provide important information about a comprehensive service delivery system -- at local and at state levels.*

Process evaluation, on the other hand, is "aimed at elucidating and understanding the internal dynamics of program operations . . . . (It) implies an emphasis on looking at how a product or outcome is produced rather than looking at the product itself" (Patton, 1980, p. 60). Process evaluations are particularly useful for looking at areas for program improvement as well as identifying areas of existing strength. They allow the evaluator to identify the critical elements that contribute to program success or failure (Patton, 1980).

In a process evaluation, interagency coordination is approached as an ongoing activity rather than a specific product or set of products. Process evaluation does not focus on whether interagency coordination goals are achieved. Rather, it examines the route along which an interagency group travels, since the route itself may affect the group's successes or failures. Process evaluation rests on the assumption that interagency coordination is accomplished in different ways by different groups; thus, interagency coordination is not an end, but a means.

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*Editor's Note: START intends to address specific questions linked to outcomes and effectiveness of interagency coordination in a future monograph.

Why process evaluation was chosen

The reader should note that process evaluation, rather than outcome evaluation, is the focus of this paper. We have chosen to emphasize process evaluation because most HCEEP state plan grant personnel (our primary target audience for this monograph) are in the process of developing their unique approach to interagency coordination. Process evaluation, with its focus on ongoing activities, can provide feedback which can be used to refine or modify the approaches used to develop an effective interagency structure.

How this paper is organized

This paper is organized into two sections. The first discusses several issues relevant to conceptualizing a process evaluation of interagency coordination. The second describes selected process evaluation methods and instruments. In addition, examples of evaluation instruments and summaries of state and local evaluation studies of interagency coordination are appended.

SECTION I

Issues in Developing and Evaluating Interagency Coordination

Interagency coordination has a long history; in the United States, interagency efforts can be traced as far back as the late 1800s. In recent years, interagency coordination has received increased attention at local, state, and national levels. Local service providers, frustrated with existing service delivery systems, have set up community-based interagency groups to help clients receive appropriate services. The increased emphasis on interagency coordination has also affected state-level organizations. Many states have attempted to reduce duplication and inefficiency and increase quality of services through agency and department reorganizations. At the national level there have been numerous initiatives, many stemming from a 1971 memorandum on interagency coordination from Elliot Richardson, then Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare.

But despite the recent emphasis on interagency coordination, only limited documentation is available on how this coordination directly affects service delivery. Compounding this problem is the scarcity of evaluation studies in this area. Briefly, some of the reasons for the lack of interagency evaluations are:

- Interagency coordination is a philosophy akin to "motherhood and apple pie." An idea with immense face value, little objection is raised to interagency coordination. In fact, many have advocated "coordination reforms in the face of consistently discouraging evidence . . . ." (Weiss, 1981, p. 21).

- Serious methodological problems are associated with attempts to research and evaluate interagency coordination. Sound research and evaluation methodologies are incomplete (Morrisey, Hall, & Lindsay, 1982), and no standard analytical framework is available (Martin, Chackerian, Imershein, & Frumkin, 1983). Further, existing conceptual tools are inadequate for dealing with the complex questions that accompany evaluation efforts in interagency coordination.

- With no framework or guidelines available, some researchers believe that, consequently, every aspect of the interagency group and its environment must be evaluated to achieve adequate assessment (Frumkin, Imershein, Chackerian, & Martin, 1983). This approach often makes the evaluation ridiculously expensive.

The evaluation challenges that interagency coordination represents are further complicated by the very nature of the interagency effort. Interagency coordination has many dimensions and may be defined in many ways. Recognizing and understanding the complex, multidimensional nature of interagency coordination can make the evaluation challenge more manageable. To help accomplish this, we have highlighted four interagency issues of significance to evaluation efforts:

(1) Interagency coordination has varied and conflicting definitions.

(2) Agencies involved in interagency coordination may have different purposes for their involvement.

(3) Interagency coordination follows many patterns; i.e., interagency process has varied configurations.

(4) Interagency coordination is a dynamic, interactional process.

Each of these issues is discussed below.

Definitions of Interagency Coordination

No single, generally accepted definition exists for interagency coordination (Gage, 1976), a fact that is in large part due to its multidimensional nature. Obviously, the difficulty of measuring or evaluating

a process such as interagency coordination increases significantly when no clear definitions are available. Early attempts to define interagency coordination neglected the complexity of the concept (Pelosi & Wiegerink, 1981). Gans and Horton (1975) defined it as a "linking together by various means the services of two or more service providers to allow treatment of an individual's or family's needs in a more coordinated and comprehensive manner (p. 32)."

HEW Secretary Elliot Richardson (1971) characterized interagency coordination as a way to organize service delivery for people at the local level (Agranoff & Pattakos, 1979). On the other hand, HEW Undersecretary Frank Carlucci (1974) emphasized interagency coordination as a way to achieve more efficient management and cost effectiveness in the service delivery system by eliminating duplication, fragmentation, and gaps in the system (Pelosi, et al, 1981).

Redburn (1977) elaborated on the distinction between "administrative integration"--coordination of agencies at the administrative level--and coordination at the direct service level. He noted that evidence does not clearly support the assumption that direct service delivery will automatically result from administrative reorganization. The definition offered by Agranoff (1977) perhaps most clearly describes interagency coordination's multidimensional nature. In his approach to interagency coordination, Agranoff (1977) identified four separate dimensions. He suggests that interagency coordination be considered at each of these four distinct levels:

(1) as an approach to services delivery systems;

(2) as an attempt to develop community-level linkages between independent agencies;

(3) as an attempt to reorganize large human services delivery bureaucracies; and/or

(4) as a governmental attempt to develop and manage more coherent public policies.

Martin, Chackerian, Imershein, and Frumkin (1983) described four similar levels of interagency coordination: service delivery, client, administrative, and legislative and policy making. Differentiating between these levels of interagency coordination emphasizes the differences between state and local roles and responsibilities in coordination efforts. Often, local coordination tends to be client- and service-related, while state interagency coordination tends to be policy or administratively oriented. However, the relationships among state and local interagency efforts can facilitate, as well as hinder, effective coordination at either level.

One of the first distinctions that an evaluation planner must consider in designing a process evaluation for interagency coordination is how the coordination effort is defined. For example, is the coordination aimed at integrating the administrative structures of two or more state or local agencies, or is it aimed at reorganizing service delivery processes at a community level? The way in which each member of an interagency group defines interagency coordination will largely determine the agency's expectations for its role in the coordination effort and its expectations for the outcomes of the effort. Examining the congruence of interagency group members' definitions of "coordination," and understanding each agency's purpose for coordination will lay the ground work for a process evaluation.

Purposes of Interagency Coordination

Agencies join coordination efforts for many reasons, some of which are not always immediately apparent. The purposes behind interagency coordination, as described in the literature, are varied.

- Laws exist at state, local, and national levels that require interagency coordination (May & Meyer, 1980; Woodard, Cooper, & Trohanis, 1982; Christensen, 1984; Rotberg, Forness, Lynch, Gardner, Urbano, & Bender, 1982).

- Monetary incentives attract agency personnel who believe they can achieve greater cost effectiveness by combining manpower and other resources (Morrill, 1976).

- Communication with agencies that already belong to an interagency group often draws outside agencies to the group (Perry, 1978).

- A chance to gain access to more and better resources attracts agencies, especially those whose own resources are limited (Levine and White, 1961).

- Agencies join together as their interests in specific problem areas converge (Aram & Stratton, 1974).

- Philosophical considerations prompt some groups to joing interagency efforts; for example agencies may be frustrated with existing systems (Agranoff, 1977) or agencies believe interagency coordination can help create a better world for those receiving special services (Weiss, 1981).

- "Turf protection" is important for some agencies, who join an interagency group so they will have input into any decisions that may affect them (Flynn, 1984).

- Public relations benefits pull some agencies to coordination efforts; these groups use interagency coordination, in part, to advertise the benefits of their particular program (Flynn, 1984).

Because there are diverse reasons for any agency to become involved in an interagency coordination effort, an obvious and critical variable for a process evaluation is each agency's perception of the purpose for their involvement. The effectiveness and dynamics of the group will be seriously affected by what each participant is expecting to accomplish from participation in the interagency effort.

Patterns of Interagency Coordination

A further clarification and specification of what an interagency coordination effort is trying to accomplish can be provided by examining of the specific patterns of relationships, or linkages, among participating

agencies. The patterns of these relationships, or linkages, represent a simplified way of characterizing the exchange relationships that facilitate the coordination of two or more agencies (Pattakos & Smith, 1982). A broad range of types of linkage structures exist, including: information sharing, joint planning and programming, joint use of staff, purchase of services, consolidated personnel administration, cross-agency assignment, joint record keeping, joint outreach, and joint evaluation (Agranoff & Pattakos, 1979).

The types of linkage patterns that will be created or modified by an interagency coordination effort will depend upon the level of coordination attempted (service delivery, state or local administration, or policy) and the specific purposes for the coordination. Thus, each coordination effort will be striving for a unique configuration of linkages among agencies; the configuration reflects the context and goals of the group. For this reason, examining changes in linkage patterns among agencies is one of the essential components of a process evaluation. Such data will describe how interagency relationships evolve and will document progress toward goals that involve changes in linkage patterns.

Interagency Coordination as a Dynamic Process

The final issue, and one of the most challenging issues faced by those involved in an evaluation of interagency coordination efforts, is the dynamic, interactional quality of the coordination process. When a group of people assemble to accomplish specific tasks, their success is often affected by how well individual personalities in the group mesh and by the dynamics of the group interactions and processes. A large body of literature has evolved on the subject of successful group processes. Most authors agree that an effective group usually clearly defines its goals, demonstrates effective

leadership, and uses decision-making processes to create results (e.g., Stech & Ratliffe, 1979). Further, a healthy, dynamic interagency team has been shown to exhibit certain characteristics. Among these are: a relaxed and informal atmosphere, an ability to handle conflict, and open expression by all group members (e.g., Bradford, 1974). This sort of group is able to gather relevant information and data, make informed choices and decisions, and remain committed to their decisions.

The difficulties of measuring these dynamic processes may seem insurmountable. However, if unresolved, they can create problems in group processing that are serious barriers to group effectiveness. A comprehensive process evaluation can examine decision-making and communication processes to pinpoint areas for improvement in group interactions.

Summary

As we have seen, interagency coordination, no simple task to begin with, is further complicated by a variety of issues. Obviously, these issues carry certain implications for any evaluation effort attempted. In particular, persons conducting a process evaluation of interagency activities must not lose sight of the complex, multidimensional nature of coordination. Process evaluation efforts, to achieve meaningful results, must be structured to:

(1) measure progress along several dimensions of interagency coordination by examining several variables or sets of variables;

(2) assess state- and local-level coordination activities and the relationship between them vis-a-vis the entire interagency structure; and

(3) account for the dynamic nature of the coordination process by identifying a baseline, then studying changes in the selected variables <u>over time</u>.

In Section II, a discussion of process evaluation methodology is presented to assist HCEEP state plan grant staff and related agencies in conducting and managing successful evaluation efforts.

SECTION II

Process Evaluation Methods

Successful functioning of an interagency group depends upon the smooth interplay of many variables. The Section I discussion of interagency coordination issues was intended to highlight for readers some of the more important variables that might be included in a process evaluation. This section describes examples of methods which have been developed to examine these types of variables. Discussions will focus on measuring precursors for success; measuring relationships and linkages among agencies; measuring dynamic processes in interagency coordination; and examining state-community relationships.

Measuring Precursors to Successful Interagency Coordination

A particularly helpful structure for looking at some of the variables important to include in a process evaluation has been provided by Whetten (1981). In light of two general types of purposes for coordination, voluntary vs. mandated, Whetten suggests eight factors which pave the way to successful coordination efforts. These include (as shown in Table 1):

- For voluntary coordination:

1) a positive attitude toward coordination
2) a recognized need for coordination
3) awareness of potential coordination partners
4) assessment of compatibility and desirability
5) the capacity to maintain the coordination process

Table 1

Precursors to Successful Coordination

Voluntary Coordination

1 Positive Attitude Towards Coordination	2 Recognized Need For Coordination	3. Awareness of Potential Coordination Partners	4 Assessment of Compatibility and Desirability	5. Capacity for Maintaining Coordination Process
a. Cosmopolitan ethos	a. Interdependence	a. Informal contact	a. Status congruity	a. Adequate resources and staff
b. Strong professional background and values	b. Broad goals	b. Geographic proximity	b. Compatible ideology and definition of problems	b. Adequate communication channels
c. Organization policies and rewards provide positive reinforcement	c. Diverse clients	c. Formal communication	c. Domain consensus	c. Flexible rules and procedures
	d. Wide range of services		d. Complementary organizational structures and procedures	d. Professional staff

Mandated Coordination

1 Awareness of Mandate	2. Assessment of Compatibility and Desirability	3. Capacity for Maintaining Coordination Process
a. Understanding of mandate	a. Status congruity	a. Adequate resources and staff
b. Knowledge of interacting organizations	b. Compatible ideology and definition of problems	b. Adequate communication channels
	c. Domain consensus	c. Flexible rules and procedures
	d. Complementary organizational structures and procedures	d. Professional staff
	e. Goal compatibility	

Source: David A. Whetten, "Interorganizational Relations: A Review of the Field," **Journal of Higher Education** 52 (September 1981), p. 15.

- For mandated coordination
  1) an awareness of the mandate
  2) assessment of compatibility and desirability
  3) the capacity to maintain the coordination process

In developing a process evaluation plan, examining some or all of these precursors may give a group insight into its "readiness" for working together.

For ease of discussion, Whetten's eight factors can be grouped into three areas, 1) situational characteristics, which subsume the variables related to "awareness of coordination partners" and "assessment of compatibility and desirability;" 2) basis for effort, which includes considerations related to "attitude towards coordination" and "recognized need for coordination;" and 3) resource sharing, which reflects the variables related to the "capacity to maintain the coordination process." Examples of useful methods for examining each of these areas are discussed below.

Situational Characteristics. Measures of situational characteristics focus on factors such as awareness, domain similarity and consensus, and geographic proximity. Awareness deals with the extent to which each interagency team member is familiar with the services and goals of the other agencies. Domain similarity is the extent to which agencies obtain their funds from the same sources, share similar goals, employ staff with similar professional backgrounds and skills, and provide similar services. Domain similarity also refers to compatibility of goals and philosophy of agencies involved in the coordination effort. While domain similarity may facilitate the formation of relationships among agencies, it may also foster competition and attempts by some agencies to protect their perceived "turfs."

Domain consensus refers to the extent of agreement between agencies about the problems and needs in the service delivery system and the role of each agency involved in the network of services. Researchers agree that the level of domain consensus affects the quality of interagency relationships (Schmidt

& Kochan, 1977 and Hall et al., 1977). The Interunit Relationship Scale (Bronheim, Cohen, & Magrab, 1985) includes measures of awareness, domain similarity, and domain consensus. (See Appendix A.)

Basis for Effort. As discussed earlier, the purposes of a coordination effort can vary tremendously and may range from mandatory collaboration to an interest in increased access to resources or more efficient services. Often, the distinctions among these purposes are not consistent across members of an interagency group. In addition to examining the congruence of purpose among group agencies, several related factors which further describe the basis for coordination can be explored. Among these are the values and attitudes of the agencies towards the effort and its goals, the reinforcement structures within the agencies for coordination efforts, the perceived needs of agencies for coordination, and the level and nature of existing interagency interactions. Morrissey, Hall, and Lindsey (1982) offer suggestions for measurement of many of these types of factors. They review and describe instruments they have categorized into four areas: voluntary vs. mandated interactions (measures which tap agencies' perceptions of reasons relationships exist between organizations), ad hoc vs. formalized interactions (measures which assess the degree to which the roles of agencies within a group are clearly prescribed and formalized), bargaining or exchange interactions (measures which describe the nature of negotiation in interagency relationships), and interpersonal ties (measures which clarify the nature of personal relationships among personnel in different agencies).

Resource Sharing. These characteristics reflect the ways in which agencies participating in the coordination effort exchange information, money, clients, referrals, consultation, technical assistance, "power," and other resources. Van de Ven & Ferry (1980) have designed a survey focused on how

agencies depend upon each other for resources that will help them reach their respective goals. The Organization Assessment Instrument (Van de Ven & Ferry, 1980) can be used by an organization to measure its relationships with other agencies. An extensive, well-validated, and reliable instrument, it provides information about the degree, type, and quality of communication among agencies; the extent to which agencies share a power base; the way resources flow (or are shared) among agencies; and the competition for these resources.

To help state and local interagency groups obtain a baseline picture across all three areas of precursors described above, Bronheim, Cohen, & Magrab (1985) developed an instrument based largely on the earlier work of Cohen (1984) and Van de Ven & Ferry (1980). This instrument, the Interunit Relationship Scale (see Appendix A), is used to gather information that focuses on domain similarity, task specialization, interdependence, leadership, central control, formalization of relationships, interunit communication and interaction; interunit competition, resource flow, interunit awareness and consensus, and perceived value of relationships. This scale is useful for documenting baseline characteristics and for measuring changes in the coordination processes. Since changes in a service delivery system are often the desired end result for interagency coordination efforts, it is important to understand the ways in which service domains, administrative requirements, flow of resources, and philosophical/policy statements may change.

Measuring Relationships and Linkages Between Agencies

States and communities, once they have established their interagency goals, usually develop plans that change their linkage patterns, or the ways agencies interact with one another. For example, some communities may find it beneficial for their health and education agencies to develop increased interactions--from simple information sharing to joint use of staff and joint programming for children with special needs.

To help interagency groups conduct a process evaluation that monitors changes in agency linkage patterns, an Interorganizational Linkage Matrix (Bronheim, Cohen, and Magrab 1985) has been developed. (See Appendix B.) A useful approach for using the Interorganizational Linkage Matrix is the three-step process presented below.

STEP 1 -- Complete the Interorganizational Linkage Matrix based on what each agency perceives to be the ideal agency interactions and linkages for meeting interagency goals or specific objectives at the state or community level.

STEP 2 -- Complete the Interorganizational Linkage Matrix before embarking on an action plan.

STEP 3 -- Complete the Interorganizational Linkage Matrix at regular intervals as the action plan is implemented.

Comparing the various results obtained from each of these three steps yields significant insight into the process and progress of the coordination effort.

Measuring Dynamic Processes in Interagency Coordination

The dynamic human element is perhaps the most intangible factor in an interagency coordination process, and is often ignored in developing a process evaluation strategy. However, if a process evaluation is to positively

influence an interagency coordination effort, then examining dynamic processes will likely be an important component of the evaluation effort.

Typically, an interagency group uses an introspective approach when examining decision-making and communication processes. This type of self-examination can be threatening to a group, therefore it has been found to be a good idea to have a "neutral" person not involved with the day-to-day work of the interagency team conduct this part of the evaluation. Maintaining the anonymity of individuals' responses increases the validity of such self-examinations.

Several dimensions of interagency group interactions that can be included in a evaluation of group processes include:

- Is effective leadership present in the team?
- Are communication and decision-making processes effective?
- How well does the team manage conflict?
- Is the team cohesive?
- Does team interaction provide support for accomplishing group tasks?
- Do external factors influence team functioning?

The responses to these questions may create the nucleus of a self-study that reveals the team's ability to work together. The Organization Dimensions Scale (Cohen, 1981) in Appendix C is a useful tool for monitoring the processes occurring in a state or community interagency group. Where team subgroups exist, the scale can be used to monitor subgroup processes as well. A scale like Cohen's Organizational Dimensions Scale is recommended for administration on a routine basis; this prevents team members from viewing such evaluation as a response to a problem or a crisis. The information obtained from these procedures can diagnose problems with group dynamics. As a result, further group action, consultation and/or change may be required.

Examining the State-Community Partnership

The previous discussions of process evaluation have stressed that interagency groups must monitor their own processes and activities in order to gauge the effectiveness of their coordination efforts--efforts which should, ultimately, create positive changes in service delivery to young handicapped children and their families.

However, one should note that service delivery systems for these youngsters are also affected by the type of relationships existing between state-level interagency groups and local-level interagency groups. To assess the quality and strength of these state-community links and their affect on service delivery systems, groups conducting an interagency process evaluation may wish to include a component that would monitor these state-community relationships.

Some of the process evaluation strategies discussed earlier can be adapted to assess this relationship. For example, items from the Interunit Relationships Scale can be completed by a state interagency group and the local group to assess factors such as interdependence, leadership and central control, interunit communication, interunit work and resource flow, interunit communication, and perceived value of relationships. Additional areas for assessment might include the degree to which the state and local unit share the same philosophy of service delivery, the degree to which the state-level counterpart facilitates the work of the community, and the extent to which the community is responsive to statewide regionalized service expansion. Questions may be generated on whether the state has provided needed technical assistance, training, and policy leadership that facilitate collaborative and comprehensive services.

Summary

In this section, several procedures which can be used to monitor the progress of an interagency group were described. In summary, they include:

(1) examining existing conditions and relationships that influence the work of the interagency group,

(2) examining changes in linkage patterns among agencies involved in the coordination effort; and

(3) examining the dynamics and decision-making processes of the interagency group to improve group interactions.

In effect, process evaluation entails a series of baseline measures and periodic monitoring of several aspects of the interagency process. Implicit in process evaluation is the notion that the results will be used to guide and improve the continued work of the interagency group.

SUMMARY

To achieve meaningful child- and family-oriented outcomes, interagency groups at state and local levels must function effectively and efficiently. Therefore, factors that affect group functioning must be monitored and assessed. Process evaluation, if done correctly, is a means for achieving this type of assessment--assessment which is critical to interagency success.

In this document, we have attempted to provide a sound structure for interagency personnel who are conceptualizing and planning process evaluation strategies. In summary, persons attempting to set up process evaluation of interagency coordination should:

(1) Determine or clarify the definition of coordination. On what level is collaboration being attempted?

(2) Determine or clarifying the purpose(s) for the coordination. What are the reasons for coordination? What will each agency receive from the effort?

(3) Determine the existing relationships among agencies; decide what relationships should ideally exist. Which linkages will be important to your goals for coordination?

(4) Assess the quality and nature of the interagency group processes. How well are the agencies and the personnel within them working together?

To help answer these questions, this paper has described several instruments and includes three particularly relevant measures as examples.

Because interagency efforts vary tremendously from state to state, however, personnel involved in planning an interagency evaluation should remember that existing instruments may not always be appropriate for their needs. Instruments or items from instruments should be carefully examined to determine whether they need to be adapted to better suit each unique context.

This document also includes summaries of selected state and local interagency coordination evaluation studies (see Appendix D). The studies reflect a range of evaluation approaches, results, and recommendations. They should provide further stimulation to those planning an evaluation of interagency coordination.

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Appendix A

The Interunit Relationship Scale

(Bronheim, Cohen, & Magrab, 1985)

For information on how to use, score, and interpret the results from this scale, contact:

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INTERUNIT RELATIONSHIPS SCALE*

The questions below are intended to describe the relationships of your work unit (organization) to other work units (organizations) engaged in planning, management, or service delivery for children with special needs. Identify the units (agencies, provider groups, consumer groups, etc.) you wish to evaluate your relationship with -- give each unit a number. For each relationship, answer each questions by filling in the number of your response in the column corresponding to the appropriate organization. Where specified use numbers from scales that reflect your best estimate of the interunit relationship. If you don't know the answer to any question fill in the number nine (9) in the space provided.

		Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	Unit 6
1. Domain similarity							
In relation to the other unit, to what extent does your organizational unit: (use scale below)							
a. do the same kind of work (provide the same services)?	3a	___	___	___	___	___	___
b. serve the same client population?	3b	___	___	___	___	___	___
c. serve the same geographic area?	3c	___	___	___	___	___	___

To no extent	Little extent	Some extent	Considerable extent	Very great extent
1	2	3	4	5

2. Task specialization							
In relation to the other unit, to what extent does your organizational unit: (use scale above)							
a. have similar operating goals?	4a	___	___	___	___	___	___
b. have personnel with similar training?	4b	___	___	___	___	___	___
c. use the same information, equipment, or technology?	4c	___	___	___	___	___	___
3. Interdependence							
a. For the other unit to accomplish its goals and responsibilities how much does it need services, resources or support from your unit?	5a	___	___	___	___	___	___

Not at all	Very little	Some	Quite a bit	Very much
1	2	3	4	5

b. For your unit to accomplish its goals and responsibilities how much do you need services, resources, resources, or support from the other unit? (use scale above)	5b	___	___	___	___	___	___

		Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	Unit 6
4. Leadership and central control							
a. To what extent does your unit look to the other unit for leadership on definition of objectives, plans, or methods for your work?	6a	___	___	___	___	___	___
b. Is there an agency, committee, council, or consortium that governs relations between your unit and the other unit?	6b	___	___	___	___	___	___

No committee or agency	Coordinating agency	Two-organization committee	Multi-organization committee
0	1	2	3

c. To what extent do decisions of interorganizational agencies or committees bind your unit and the other unit.	6c	___	___	___	___	___	___

To no extent	Little extent	Some extent	Considerable extent	Very great extent
1	2	3	4	5

5. Formalization and standardization of relations							
a. To what extent have the terms of the relationship between your organizational unit and the other unit:							
1. been explicitly discussed and detailed?	7a1	___	___	___	___	___	___
2. been written in contracts or affiliation agreements?	7a2	___	___	___	___	___	___
3. been mandated by law or regulation?	7a3	___	___	___	___	___	___
b. In what extent are interactions between your unit and the other unit governed by standard operating procedures (e.g., rules, policies, guidelines, forms, formal communication channels)? (use scale above)	7b	___	___	___	___	___	___
6. Interunit communication							
a. During the past four months how frequently have been in contact with the other unit:							
1. through written letters, memos, or reports?	8a1	___	___	___	___	___	___
2. through personal conversations?	8a2	___	___	___	___	___	___

		Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	Unit 6
3. through committee meetings with 3 or more people from your organization, from the other unit or from outside organizations?	8a3	___	___	___	___	___	___

Not once 0 | 1-2 times 1 | Monthly 2 | Twice monthly 3 | Weekly 4 | Several times a week 5

b. In general what percent of contacts were initiated:

1. by you or people in your organization?	8b1	___	___	___	___	___	___
2. by people in the other unit?	8b2	___	___	___	___	___	___
3. by people outside both organizations?	8b3	___	___	___	___	___	___

7. Interunit competition

To what extent does your unit compete with this other unit for:

a. clients?	9a	___	___	___	___	___	___
b. funding?	9b	___	___	___	___	___	___
c. staff?	9c	___	___	___	___	___	___
d. leadership on policy direction or standard setting?	9d	___	___	___	___	___	___

To no extent 1 | Little extent 2 | Some extent 3 | Considerable extent 4 | Very great extent 5

8. Interunit work flow and resource flow

a. To what extent did the other unit receive each of the following resources from its relationship with your unit during the past four months? (use scale above)

1. Money or property (e.g., supplies, equipment)	10a1	___	___	___	___	___	___
2. Client referrals	10a2	___	___	___	___	___	___
3. Consultation or technical assistance	10a3	___	___	___	___	___	___

9. In what extent did your unit receive resources from the other unit during the past four months?

1. Money or property (e.g., supplies, equipment)	10b1	___	___	___	___	___	___

		Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	Unit 6
2. Client referrals	10b2	____	____	____	____	____	____
3. Consultation or technical assistance	10b3	____	____	____	____	____	____

To no extent	Little extent	Some extent	Considerable extent	Very great extent
1	2	3	4	5

c. During the past four months how often have you encountered exceptions to the normal flow of work resources, or services received from or sent to this other unit? (use scale in d below) 10c ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____

d. During the past four months how often did delays or other problems arise in sending or receiving work, resources, or services to or from this other unit? 10d ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____

Not once	1-2 times	Monthly	Twice monthly	Weekly	Several times a week
0	1	2	3	4	5

10. Interunit awareness

a. How many years has your unit been involved in some fashion with this other unit? 11a ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____

b. How well informed are you about the specific goals and services of the other unit? 11b ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____

Not at all	Little informed	Somewhat informed	Quite informed	Very well informed
1	2	3	4	5

11. Interunit consensus

How much does your unit agree or disagree with the other unit on:

a. the way work is organized and performed in the service system 12a ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____

b. the specific terms of relations between units? 12b ____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____

Disagree very much	Agree a little	Agree somewhat	Agree quite a bit	Agree very much
1	2	3	4	5

		Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	Unit 6
12. Quality of interunit interaction							
a. Overall how much difficulty do you experience in getting ideas across clearly in communications to individuals in this other unit?							
No contact 0 / None 1 / Little 2 / Some 3 / Quite a bit 4 / Very much 5							
b. When you want communicate with individual in the other unit how much difficulty do you have in getting in touch with them? (use scale above)	13b	___	___	___	___	___	___
c. In what extent have individuals in this other unit hindered your unit in performing its functions during the past four months?	13c	___	___	___	___	___	___
To no extent 1 / Little extent 2 / Some extent 3 / Considerable extent 4 / Very great extent 5							
13. Mutual influence and accommodation							
a. How much influence or say over the internal policies and operations of your unit does this other unit have?	14a	___	___	___	___	___	___
None 1 / Little 2 / Some 3 / Quite a bit 4 / Very much 5							
b. How much influence or say over the internal policies and operations of the other unit does your unit have? (use scale above)	14b	___	___	___	___	___	___
c. During the past four months how often were there disagreements or disputes between people in your unit and this other unit?	14C	___	___	___	___	___	___
Not once 0 / 1-2 times 1 / About monthly 2 / Twice monthly 3 / About weekly 4 / Several times a week 5							
d. How well are any differences worked out at this time between you unit and this other unit?	14d	___	___	___	___	___	___
Very Poorly 1 / Poorly 2 / Adequately 3 / Well 4 / Very well 5							
14. Perceived value of relationships							
a. To what extent has this other unit carried out its responsibilities and commitments in relations to your unit during the past several months.	15a	___	___	___	___	___	___

		Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	Unit 6
b.	To what extent is the time and effort spent in developing and maintaining the relationship with this other unit worthwhile?	15b ____	____	____	____	____	____
c.	Overall to what extent are you satisfied with the relationship between your unit and this other unit?	15c ____	____	____	____	____	____

To no extent	Little extent	Some extent	Considerable extent	Very great extent
1	2	3	4	5

* Adapted from Evaluation of Statewide Hypertension Programs, Perry Cohen, 1984 and Measuring and Assessing Organizations, Ander H. Van de Ven & Diane L. Ferry, John Wiley, New York, 1980.

Appendix B

The Interorganizational Linkage Matrix

(Bronheim, Cohen, & Magrab, 1985)

For information on how to use, score, and interpret the results from this scale, contact:

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INTERORGANIZATIONAL LINKAGE MATRIX

Using the same Unit numbering system as you used for the Interunit Relationship Scale, complete the matrix. In each box enter letters for all characteristics present for the relationship from the unit named in the row to the unit named in the column (A-G). Circle any that represent significant problems. Then develop a second matrix that represents the ideal picture of your community. You can then complete the matrix at regular intervals.

A = INFORMATION EXCHANGE ONLY (communication, staff contact)
B = RESOURCE EXCHANGE (funds, services, contracts)
C = REFERRAL OF CLIENTS
D = OVERLAPPING STAFF (joint appointments)
E = JOINT ACTIVITIES
F = JOINT PLANNING AND POLICY
G = FORMALIZED AFFILIATION RELATIONS

UNITS

Relations From:	Relations to: 1	2	3	4	5	
Unit 1						
Unit 2						
Unit 3						
Unit 4						
Unit 5						

Appendix C

The Organizational Dimensions Scale

(Cohen, 1981)

For information on how to use, score, and interpret the results from this scale, contact:

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ORGANIZATION DIMENSIONS SCALE

Please circle the number which most nearly describes how you view the functioning of the community team on the following dimensions. Also, please mark with an X how you viewed the functioning of the community team on each dimension on ____(date)____ (select a date that is close to the beginning of your effort or to the last time you completed this scale).

Goals

1.	clear	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	confused
2.	conflicting among groups	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	shared among groups
3.	members indifferent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	members feel involved
4.	supported by organizational procedures	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	not supported by organizational procedures

Leadership Style

5.	autocratic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	democratic
6.	oriented toward task	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	oriented toward people
7.	seeks change	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	maintains status quo

Coordination and Interdisciplinary Function

8.	knowledge of other professionals and agencies is low	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	knowledge of other professionals and agencies is high
9.	task responsibility in the hands of one or a few	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	task responsibility shared by staff
10.	tasks are fragmented among subgroups	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	tasks are well coordinated among subgroups
11.	responsibilities are overlapping among professional disciplines	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	responsibilities are sharply differentiated among professional disciplines

Decision Making and Procedures

12.	communication procedures are confused or unknown	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	communication procedures are clearly understood

13.	decisions are made by part of team; others' ideas and opinions are not heard	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	decisions are made by consensus; deviant information is used to improve decisions
14.	problems are not diagnosed well	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	problems are accurately diagnosed
15.	procedures to manage conflict are clear and understood	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	conflict management procedures are unknown or confused
16.	differences are denied, suppressed or avoided	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	differences are recog-recognized, confronted, and worked through
17.	the team is closed; new members are ignored by the team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	the team is open; new members are oriented quickly into group activities
18.	the team handles most tasks by routine procedures	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	the team is flexible and seeks new and better ways to work

Cohesiveness and Trust

19.	team members rarely work closely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	team members always work closely together
20.	I feel very much a part of the team								I feel outside the group; not really a part of the team
21.	consumers are well integrated into the team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	consumers remain outside the team effort
22.	interactions among the team are open	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	interactions among the team are careful and guarded
23.	feelings are not freely expressed as part of team interaction	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	feelings are freely expressed and receive empathic responses

Outcomes

24.	team interaction often hampers task achievement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	team interaction usually helps task achievement

25.	group meetings usually accomplish what is necessary	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	group meetings usually do not accomplish what is necessary
26.	all team member resources are used effectively by the group	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	many team member resources and skills are not used by the group

External Conditions

27.	regulatory requirements have limited impact on the work	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	reimbursement requirements place severe constraints on the way work is done

Adapted from Cohen, Perry D. Evaluation of Interdisciplinary Team Training and Humanistic Patient Care Training in Hospices: Case Study-Demonstration Site #1. Perry Cohen Associates, September 1981.

ORGANIZATION DIMENSIONS SCALE
Scoring Summary Sheet

		Average Scale Scores Administration 1	Administration 2	Administration 3
Goals	1			
	2			
	3			
	4			
Sub Average	-			
Leadership Style	5			
	6			
	7			
Sub Average	--			
Coordination & Interdisciplinary Function	8			
	9			
	10			
	11			
Sub Average	--			
Decision Making & Procedures	12			
	13			
	14			
	15			
	16			
	17			
	18			
Sub Average	--			
Cohesiveness & Trust	19			
	20			
	21			
	22			
	23			
Sub Average	--			
Outcomes	24			
	25			
	26			
Sub Average	--			
External Conditions	27			
	28			
Sub Average	--			

Appendix D

Summaries of Selected State and Local Evaluation Studies of Service Coordination Projects

by

Cynthia Flynn

The following review of selected evaluation studies shows what is possible in evaluation, as well as the degree of success achieved through these evaluation studies, and what impact these studies may have on future studies. This material is not an exhaustive review of all existing studies; rather, it represents a selection of studies most relevant to this monograph.

Local-Level Evaluation

The majority of studies that have been done focuses on local-level efforts. One of the most famous of these, a study by Gans and Horton (1975), explored 30 local-level projects involved in interagency coordination. The absence of data precluded rigorous quantitative measures of efficiency or cost effectiveness. The study was an outcome evaluation requested by the federal government to recommend changes (needed at the federal level) for facilitating local coordinated service delivery. Gans and Horton (1975) found that there is no one best services integration model that every community should follow. They recommended the federal government take steps to facilitate and shape interagency coordination efforts by creating an environment that: includes funding policies receptive to coordination, provides technical

assistance to overcome the general lack of knowledge, monitors interagency efforts, and eliminates barriers to effective coordination.

In another study, Flarety, Barry, and Swift (1978) used an unobtrusive measure to evaluate the development of interagency coordination generated by an early prevention project. This outcome evaluation, done while the project was operating, examined agency coordination efforts retrospectively. They examined the project's existing records, including a central file maintained by the director's administrative assistant and the files of two secretaries. Contact with other agencies, records of meetings, and additional records documenting communication between agencies were used. Staff were also interviewed to clarify questions and problems concerning record keeping and to determine what records were missing.

Flarety et al (1978) used a quantitative method of data analysis to show the extent and form of interagency contacts, which staff were involved, and the content of the contacts. The information they collected was used to examine three areas of concern. First, they looked at the types of agencies that were contacted. Schools and child care agencies were found to be the most frequently contacted groups. The second concern was the level of staff involved. Existing records did not provide enough information to adequately answer these questions. From the limited information available, it appeared that the staff involved were outreach workers and supervisors. The third and final area of concern focused on the content of the interagency contacts. Most contacts were "information giving," followed by discussions of service provision, linkage initiation, and program development.

Van de Ven, Walker, and Liston (1979) examined and compared coordination patterns among clusters of organizations; all of these organizations belonged to a larger network of human service agencies. Van de Ven et al (1979)

evaluated the reasons for coordination given by the other organizations. They focused on patterns of relationships in an identifiable population of agencies bound together by geography, allied domains, target client populations, etc. (Van de Ven et al, 1979). A survey was distributed to 21 local agencies asking them to identify the five agencies with whom they had the most direct involvement in the preceeding six months. A quantitative method of analysis was used to look at the number of times agencies were chosen and the similarity of choices made by responding agencies. Specifically, a block modeling computer algorithm called CONCOR was used to identify nine blocks of agencies. Of these, three tightly connected clusters were identified; each was found to exist for a different reason.

They also found that significantly different patterns of interagency relationships existed between the clusters. The resource transactions cluster was characterized as having a formal procedure for accountability and an impersonal style of interaction. The planning and coordination cluster reported the lowest dependence and highest awareness and consensus. They established formal, legitimate ways of contacting one another, but not for a legal or mandatory agreement (Van de Ven et al, 1979). The last cluster, direct services, reported the least formal procedures for contacting one another. Van de Ven et al (1979) concluded, as a result of this study, that "it is important to determine the different reasons for interorganizational relationships if one is to understand the various patterns of coordination among clusters of organizations within interorganizational networks" (p. 19).

State-Level Evaluation

Few evaluation studies have been conducted at the state level. Because many of the existing studies examine the Florida reorganization effort, the studies reviewed for this paper are those that focus on Florida. Lynn (1976)

did an in-depth analysis of the Florida reorganization, developing a framework for analysis that is designed as a first step for predicting how states will deal with human service organizations. He used a pluralistic frame of reference to examine the roles and interrelationships of the governor, the legislature, and the mental health community.

In conducting his study, Lynn (1976) did not follow the typical scientific model of hypothesis, pretest, intervention, and post-test. Rather, the study was an in-depth analysis that examined the events leading up to the Florida State Legislature's reorganization of the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services. Lynn (1976) raised some important questions. The most important question was: If states acquire greater autonomy, what types of human service organizations can be expected, over time, to emerge?

This question, of course, led to other inquiries. Although Lynn's methods of inquiry were not detailed specifically, he appears to have interviewed all persons involved, collected information on the organizations involved, and analyzed specific legislation. This type of in-depth analysis was needed because of the multifaceted nature of reorganization at that level of state government. Lynn's summary comments did not refer to methodological successes or failures. Instead, he focused on what could be learned from the Florida experience and on specific recommendations for Florida. His comments are not easily summarized and are best understood by reading the entire article.

Frumkin, Imershein, Chackerian, and Martin (1983) examined state-level coordination in Florida from a different perspective. They did not focus on the political context; instead, they theorized that it was more practical to study "the day-to-day activities and decisions that take place within specific organizational structures" (Frumkin et al, 1983, p. 19).

Frumkin et al (1983) found that most evaluation studies fall short of adequately assessing the promise of services integration because they: (1) examine the "what," not the "why," (2) were not sufficiently inclusive to evaluate multiple levels of functioning and their interrelationships, and (3) used data drawn from existing organizational documents or informant interviews (Frumkin et al, 1983). They describe a new methodology (still in development stages) that is based on the assumption that stated goals cannot form the basis for evaluating the promise of an integrated system. Goal-setting is a political process, and a different set of behaviors are often implemented.

Their research instruments, therefore, are grounded in actual observations, while their evaluation focuses on the ability to match client needs with organizational solutions (Frumkin et al, 1983). The new process involves two steps:

(1) Collecting information about problems and about the actual structure and functions. This information is collected at both the client and the agency level.

(2) Determining effectiveness and efficiency. There are two ways to collect this information. One is comparative -- holding the client constant and comparing the ability of one human service agency with an alternative structure. The second is normative -- where an ideal is created and actual solutions or matches compared to it. Evidence of success using this model has not yet been published.

Potential Models for Evaluation

McLaughlin and Covert (1984) developed a method for evaluating interagency collaboration that can be used at either state or local levels. They stressed the need for an ongoing evaluation, rather than one which looks at what has already occurred; further, they focused on the intent of the collaborative programs. This method of evaluation could be adapted for use as a process or an outcome evaluation.

Flynn (1984) analyzed local interagency coordination efforts by examining

the reasons for coordination, the strategies employed, and the final outcomes. Although not designed as an evaluation study, it could be adapted for use as a combination process and outcome evaluation study.

Members of local interagency groups were interviewed using a standard interview format. The information was analyzed using qualitative Analysis of Variance.

The analysis revealed 11 reasons for coordination; these were categorized under four headings: coercion, frustration, idealism, and attraction. Reasons for coordination varied in each community. This resulted in the use of different implementation strategies and outcomes. The strategies and outcomes were grouped into five classes: leadership, form, process, saliency, and scope. Three models of interagency coordination were formed based on these sets of reasons, strategies, and outcomes:

- The first model represents voluntary coordination formed through belief in coordination and frustration with the system. This model is characterized by low process, scope, and saliency, with high form and leadership.

- The second model represents coordination developed through negative coercion. For example, most members join to protect their respective turfs. This model exhibits strong leadership; it is low in form and scope, but is high in process and saliency.

- In the third model, coordination is based on positive coercion and belief in coordination. Most members were idealistic about coordination, frustrated by the system, and attracted through invitation. It is characterized by strong leadership, high scope and form, with low process and saliency.

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